

NEWS RELEASE



***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
San Diego, California***

***United States Attorney
Carol C. Lam***

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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - July 14, 2006

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam announced that a federal grand jury sitting in San Diego handed up an indictment charging Earl Venton Buchanan with sexual exploitation of a child, kidnaping, and transportation of child pornography. Buchanan is scheduled to be arraigned on the indictment before Magistrate Judge Peter C. Lewis, in Imperial County on Tuesday, July 18, 2006.

According to court documents, Buchanan was arrested at the Calexico West Port of Entry on July 3, 2006, after Customs and Border Protection officers discovered a video tape of a young boy being molested during a search of Buchanan's 1992 Ford Econoline van. At the time of his arrest, Buchanan was accompanied by a young boy from Banning, California. Buchanan is not related to the young boy, nor did he have consent from the boy's family to take him to Mexico. The young boy, who is five years old, is now in the custody of Child Protective Services.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Jennifer Manion, who is prosecuting the case, at his last appearance on July 7, 2006, Buchanan was ordered detained without prejudice by Magistrate Judge Lewis. Through counsel, however, Buchanan indicated he will seek a bail review at the July 18 hearing.

United States Attorney Lam said, "We are thankful that border agents were able to rescue this child and protect him from any further abuse. We will do everything in our power to see that justice is done."

"The chilling allegations of child sexual exploitation revealed in this investigation illustrate why targeting predators is a national priority for ICE," said Miguel Unzueta, Special Agent in Charge of ICE Investigations in San Diego. "The adept work of the CBP frontline inspector who first encountered the defendant crossing the international border in a car with a young boy he called his friend may have prevented countless other possible victims from sexual abuse and exploitation."

United States Attorney Lam commended the Customs and Border Protection officers at the Calexico Port of Entry who initiated the inquiry into the boy's identity and the reason he was traveling with Buchanan. Lam also praised the efforts of Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents here and in the Central District of California, who have been working together and with state agencies on the investigation.

DEFENDANT

Case Number: 06 CR 1612 H

Earl Venton Buchanan

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Title 18, United States Code, Section 2251(a), Sexual Exploitation of a Child

Maximum Penalty: Mandatory minimum of 15 years and maximum of 30 years in custody.
 \$250,000 fine
 Five years of supervised release

Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1201(a)(1) and (g), Kidnaping a Child

Maximum Penalty: Mandatory minimum of 20 years and maximum of life in custody
 \$250,000 fine
 Five years of supervised release

Title 18, United States Code, Section 2252(a)(1), Transportation of Material
Involving the Sexual Exploitation of a Child

Maximum Penalty: Mandatory minimum of 5 years and maximum of 20 years in custody
 \$250,000 fine
 Three years of supervised release

INVESTIGATING AGENCIES

Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Customs and Border Protection
San Bernardino Sheriff's Department

An indictment is not evidence that the defendant committed the crimes charged. The defendant is presumed innocent until the Government meets its burden in court of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.